

Combined Impact Assessment Toolkit

Guidance Notes

Version: Final v2
Last updated: Sept 2023
Last update by: A FitzGerald

Contents

1. Introduction	3
1.1 What is a Combined Impact Assessment?	3
1.2 When should it be used?	3
1.3 How is the CIA structured?	4
2. Undertaking a CIA	4
2.1 How to use the tool.....	4
2.2 Who should do the CIA?.....	5
2.3 What to do with your completed CIA.....	6
3. Full or further impact assessments	6
3.1 Equality Impact Assessment.....	6
3.2 Health Impact Assessment	7
3.3 Climate, sustainability and nature impact assessment.....	8
4. Sources of information.....	8
4.1 Key contacts for information, help and advice.....	8
4.2 Evidence and data.....	8

1. Introduction

These guidance notes explain what a Combined Impact Assessment (CIA) is and why, when and how we need to do one. It also sets out how the wider CIA toolkit should be used.

1.1 What is a Combined Impact Assessment?

The Combined Impact Assessment (CIA) is a simple screening tool consisting of a series of questions and prompts. This is a self-assessment tool to help officers think about how their policies, strategies, projects, procurements, commissioning and services might impact on our communities.

It will help to ensure a consistent approach to completion of impact assessments across the council and help officers to critically assess whether a proposal has wider impacts beyond its intended outcomes, and if it impacts differentially on different communities or places. It will also allow consideration of how any positive impacts of a particular proposal may be increased and any negative impacts reduced.

The tool covers a range of categories including equalities, climate and sustainability, health and other socio-economic factors that all contribute to thriving, healthy communities. A single tool (rather than multiple individual impact assessments) should lead to a more holistic approach considering different agendas and implications in the round.

The CIA is an important part of how the Council develops new policies, proposals and activities. Undertaking a CIA supports good decision making based on evidence and consideration of how our decisions will impact on the community and wider objectives. The CIA helps us:

- To plan services and develop policies which meet the needs of our diverse communities, especially those who are known to have poorer outcomes.
- To meet our legal requirements under the Equality Act 2010, and our ambitions to improve health and wellbeing, address inequalities, tackle the climate emergency and improve local economies as set out in the Council Plan.
- To challenge ourselves to ask if we are doing enough to reduce inequality and improve health and wellbeing.

If the initial screening through the CIA points to evidence of substantial impacts in a particular area then the toolkit provides fuller impact assessment tools that can be used to ensure that a more comprehensive assessment of those impacts is carried out.

1.2 When should it be used?

The CIA is designed to help you systematically consider your proposal and whether it could have any positive or negative impacts on our communities.

A CIA should be an integral part of any decision or policy making process and should be undertaken in the following scenarios:

- All executive decisions
- Development of or changes to policy or strategy

- Significant financial decisions
- Projects
- Key changes to services and functions including:
 - operational systems, policies and procedures
 - grants, contracts, commissioning, partnerships or other arrangements for provision of services

A summary of this assessment should be included on all decision papers going to Executive or Council. See paragraph 2.3 for details on what to include and publish as part of the CIA process.

1.3 How is the CIA structured?

The CIA has 3 parts:

- People
- Planet
- Place

These focus on the aims and priorities in the Council Plan.

People – this section covers protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 but also includes other factors important to the Council’s agenda such as health, socio-economic status and key groups of people such as those with care experience.

Planet – this section covers a range of factors on climate, biodiversity and the natural environment.

Place – this section picks up a range of factors relating to our places including housing, neighbourhoods, work, skills and education, access and participation.

Taken together the factors above ensure that we are considering the wider determinants of health, placing health and wellbeing at the heart of everything we do.

2. Undertaking a CIA

2.1 How to use the tool

The self-assessment is intended to help officers reflect critically on their policy, strategy, project or service's impact and is designed to be used at the start of a work plan and then adapted/added to as you work through the project/plan.

You should answer all the questions, even if the answer is ‘unclear’. It is a reflective tool, not a framework for approving or rejecting a decision, so it will work best if each question is considered honestly and carefully.

It is important to consider direct and indirect impacts when answering these questions.

The tool should also help in considering cumulative impacts. For instance, the decision to charge for services will have more impact on a particular group using those services if they are also experiencing cuts in benefits and difficulty accessing other services at the same time.

Impact: For each of the categories on the form think about what impact the proposal will have and whether these impacts will be positive or negative. Think about the impact the proposal will have on each of the different groups and factors. This will help you to identify any aspects of the proposal that impact on any group or locality in particular, and if this may lead to the creation or exacerbation inequalities.

Certainty: Think about how certain you are about your assessment of each impact and what evidence you have to substantiate your assessment. Ask yourself, ‘how do you know that?’. As far as possible your decisions should be supported using available evidence. Answering ‘unclear’ to any of the impact questions/prompts should indicate to you that you need to do some more research. There may in fact be little or no actual data available, especially in relation to some of the protected characteristics such as sexual orientation or marriage and civil partnerships. Where there is no clear evidence, you should use your best judgement, taking advice from appropriate specialist officers. Carrying out work to improve our knowledge about a specific area or group may be an action that you take forward following the CIA.

Description of impact: If you have decided that there may be an impact on a particular category then a description of the impact should be noted in this column along with details of any supporting evidence you are aware of and how you propose to minimise or maximise the impact. Where you believe there is no impact, this should be noted on the form as evidence that this point has been considered.

Summary and review

Once you have fully worked through the CIA you should summarise your results from your assessment in the summary section at the end. This is your opportunity to review the impacts you have recorded in the round and consider how they relate to each other. Each theme should have an overall colour-code applied to indicate its impact as follows:

Impact	Impact description
Positive	Positive impacts only.
Mixed	Some positive and some negative impacts.
Negative	Negative impacts only.
Neutral	No known impacts.

Note: It is important to add the text label and the background colour for ‘impact’ to the table – this will provide a visual reference, but will also provide text labels to be read out for those with visual impairments who need to use screen readers.

A narrative summary should also be completed setting out the key risks/impacts of the proposal; whether any groups are affected more than others; whether there are linkages or conflicts between social, environmental and economic impacts; how any identified impacts or mitigation activity will be monitored; and what course of action is being taken as a result of the CIA (for example, whether a full EqIA is being carried out).

2.2 Who should do the CIA?

The CIA should be undertaken by those involved in developing the proposal/policy/activity. A sound understanding of what is proposed is essential to allow the CIA to be

completed successfully. Bringing together colleagues with different perspectives will support a more robust assessment. It is good practice to involve stakeholders as well. It is important to think critically when undertaking your CIA. Consider bringing the following together:

- the person who is writing the plan, proposal or strategy
- the person who has strategic responsibility for it
- a person who will implement it
- a person with an operational or front line perspective
- service user(s) or other stakeholders

Also consider whether specialist advice is required for particular issues.

The CIA should be considered by the person with the ultimate responsibility for the policy or the service and for the decision to implement the proposal. The relevant Assistant Director needs to be aware that the CIA is being undertaken.

2.3 What to do with your completed CIA

The CIA summary (along with any additional fuller impact assessments undertaken) should be reported as part of the approval process for the proposal.

If a formal decision report is being written then the visual and narrative summary should be copied and pasted into that decision/committee report.

Please send a copy of the full completed CIA to the Strategy and Policy team policy@cumberland.gov.uk who will undertake quality assurance work to ensure we are achieving quality and consistency across the organisation.

3. Full or further impact assessments

If the initial screening through the CIA points to evidence of substantial impacts in a particular area then the toolkit provides fuller impact assessment tools that can be used to ensure that a more comprehensive assessment of those impacts is carried out: the full Equality impact Assessment and Health Impact Assessment.

3.1 Equality Impact Assessment

The People Screening Assessment in the CIA is designed to ensure that decisions and changes do not discriminate against people protected by the Equality Act (protected characteristics) and other groups who the Council has voluntarily given protected characteristic status.

The Screening and Full EqIA looks at **adverse treatment**. This is where someone (or a group) is adversely affected by a decision compared to another group. For instance – a housing policy that assumes a fixed address and does not account for many in the Gypsy Roma and Traveller community.

Adverse treatment can be conscious (direct discrimination) and not conscious (indirect discrimination). All direct discrimination is unlawful. Indirect discrimination is also unlawful unless the adverse treatment is assessed and justified.

The categories that have legal protected characteristic status are:

- Age (a specific age (65 years old) or an age-band (over 65))
- Disability (registered disability **or** a long-term health condition that affects day-to-day activities, and includes carers)
- Race (skin-colour or appearance linked to ethnicity, nationality, immigration status, ethnic group or language, and includes people of mixed-race heritages or are in relationships with people of a different ethnic group, it can overlap with Religion/Belief, i.e., antisemitism)
- Gender Reassignment (anyone undergoing treatment for change of biological sex (including those have or plan to), **or** who identify their gender as being neither male nor female (i.e., transgender, non-binary etc.))
- Pregnancy and maternity (a parent of a child during pregnancy or in the early months of a child's life)
- Sexual orientation (an individual treated unfairly because of they are gay, bi-sexual, lesbian, heterosexual, pansexual or asexual)
- Religion and belief, (religion, religious background (i.e., a non-practicing Catholic, Jew or Muslim is identified by name, community belonging etc.), non-religious beliefs (i.e., atheism) and deeply held beliefs that affect their day to day lives (i.e., vegetarianism, veganism etc.))
- Marriage and civil partnership (marital status, including single people, divorcees and widows/ers)
- Sex (designated biological sex, usually at birth – i.e., female, male and intersex)

In addition to these, the following have voluntary protected characteristic status:

- Care Experience (anyone who is a child in care, a care leaver or has been in care at some point in their childhood)
- Socio-economic status (anyone adversely affected due to their economic circumstances)
- Rural isolation (anyone adversely affected due to their rural location).

A Full EqIA is carried out where there is a reasonable concern that a decision, policy, service or function may have a substantial impact on one or more protected characteristics.

Each Full EqIA should be carried out and recorded using the Full EqIA template. The template is available at:

<https://legacy.cumberland.gov.uk/equalities/eia.asp>

Any full EqIA undertaken should be included as an Appendix alongside any decision papers relating to the proposal.

3.2 Health Impact Assessment

It may be appropriate to consider completing a fuller health impact assessment if the initial CIA suggests that there may be significant impacts around health. The Health Equity Assessment Tool (HEAT) template developed by Public Health England (now known as the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities – OHID) can help with a more in depth consideration of the health implications of your proposal. Guidance is available from officers listed below if you are unsure if this is an appropriate tool to use.

The template is available here: [Health Equity Assessment Tool \(HEAT\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/health-equity-assessment-tool). The website also includes information on how to complete the template, examples of completed templates and a link to e-learning about the HEAT tool.

3.3 Climate, sustainability and nature impact assessment

If your initial CIA indicates that there may be significant impacts either positive or negative around climate, environment or nature it may be appropriate to consider some deeper assessment of those. Speak to the lead officer listed below for some guidance about how to approach this.

4. Sources of information

4.1 Key contacts for information, help and advice

For further information and guidance about completing the People section of the CIA or the Full Equality Impact Assessments please go online to

<https://legacy.cumberland.gov.uk/equalities/eia.asp> or contact Joel Rasbash, joel.rasbash@cumberland.gov.uk Mobile: 07825103565

For further information and guidance about health impacts or about completing a more detailed Health Impact Assessment, please contact Kate Mahone, Public Health Officer.

Kate.Mahone@cumberland.gov.uk Mobile: 07900 678700

For further information and guidance about completing the Planet section of the CIA or help with more in depth assessments around climate and nature, please contact Ian Hinde

ian.hinde@cumberland.gov.uk Tel: 01900 516664

For further information and guidance about completing the Place section of the CIA please contact Ian Hinde ian.hinde@cumberland.gov.uk Tel: 01900 516664

4.2 Evidence and data

Useful data sources:

- Demographic and socio economic information – Cumbria Observatory has a wide range of data available
 - [Cumbria Observatory – Welcome to the Cumbria Observatory](#)
- Health data and analysis
 - [Cumbria Observatory – Health and Social Care profiles](#)
 - Public Health Profiles (Office for Health Improvement and Disparities): [Public health profiles - OHID \(phe.org.uk\)](#)
 - The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment assesses the current and future health and social care needs of our local communities and covers a range of themes. [Cumbria Observatory - JSNA](#)
- Environment and carbon emissions data

- [Cumbria Observatory – Environment statistics](#)

For guidance about what other data and analysis might be available internally and externally please contact Ian Brogden or Richard Corton in the first instance. ian.brogden@cumberland.gov.uk or Richard.corton@cumberland.gov.uk